

E. M. FORSTER (1879-1970)

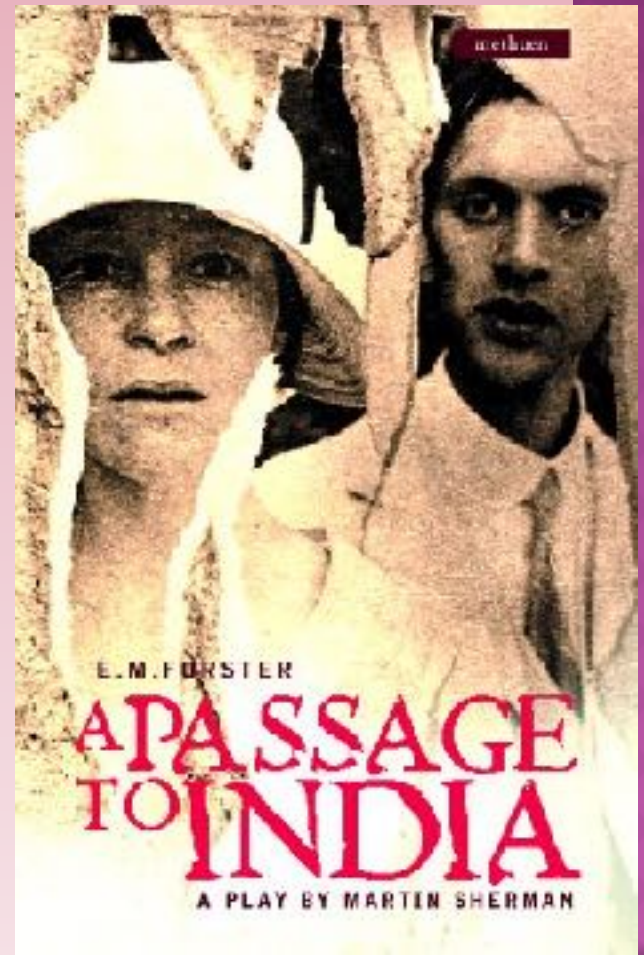
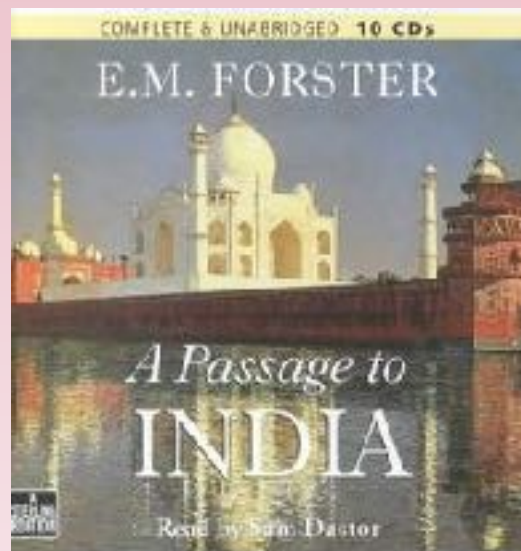




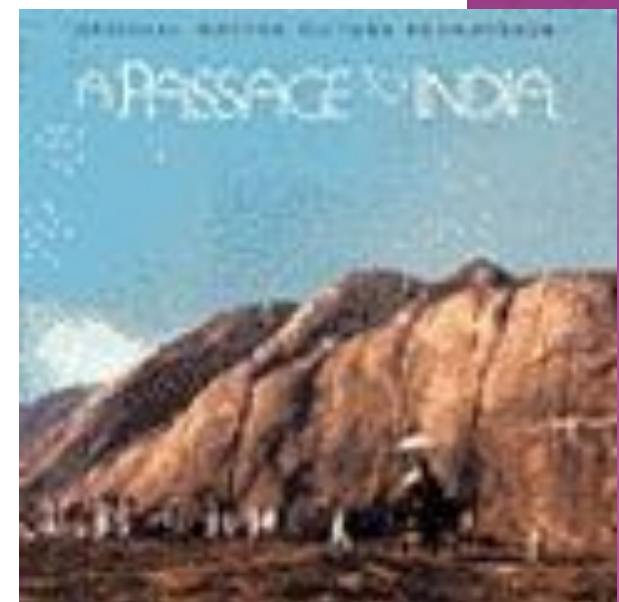
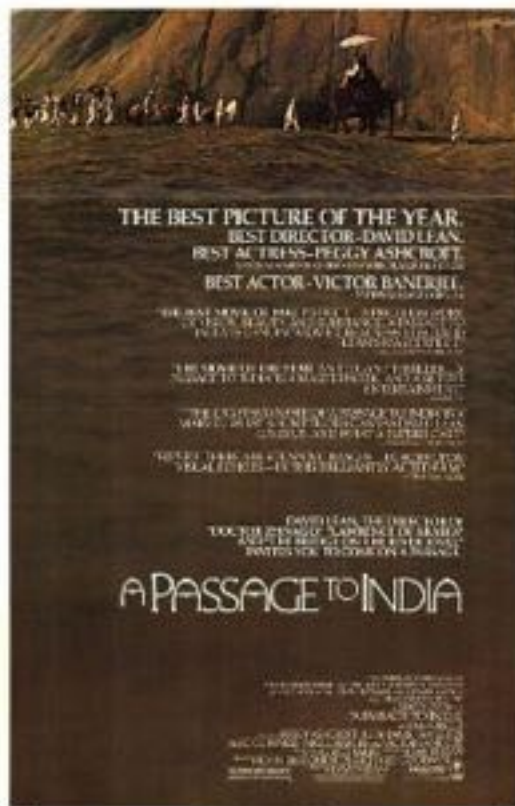
A PASSAGE TO INDIA

E.M. Forster --- *A Passage to India* in
1924

the last completed novel



A PASSAGE TO INDIA (1984 DIRECTED BY DAVID LEAN)



A PASSAGE TO INDIA

- ◉ Major Characters:
- ◉ 1. Dr. Aziz
- ◉ 2. Cyril Fielding
- ◉ 3. Adela Quested
- ◉ 4. Mrs. Moore
- ◉ 5. Professor Narayan Godbole
- ◉ 6. Ronny Heaslop

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

- ◉ The novel deals with - the **political occupation of India** by the British

THE TITLE

- Forster took the title from **Walt Whitman's poem** "Passage to India", 1870.
- **The Suez Canal**, creating a passage to India, was completed in 1869.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

- ◉ Themes:
- ◉ 1. the difficulty of **friendship between an Englishman** (the colonist) and **an Indian** (the colonized)
- ◉ 2. the racism and oppression of the British
- ◉ 3. the “muddle” (disorder) of Indian civilization and psychology









BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

- ◉ The colonial occupation of India is significant
- ◉ The typical attitude of Britons in India -
- ◉ They were undertaking the "white man's burden,"
Rudyard Kipling.

BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

- ◉ Indian **nationalism**
- ◉ began to foment around 1885 with the first meeting of the Indian National Congress
- ◉ The idea of nationalism found expression in the Muslim community

BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

- ◉ Reforms in India's political system occurred with the victory of the Liberal Party in 1906
- ◉ Leading to the Indian Councils Act of 1909

BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

- ◉ India took part in the first world war, assisting the British
- ◉ with the assumption that this help would lead to political concessions

BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

- ◉
- ◉ Irrespective of promises - relations between the English and Indians did not improve.

BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

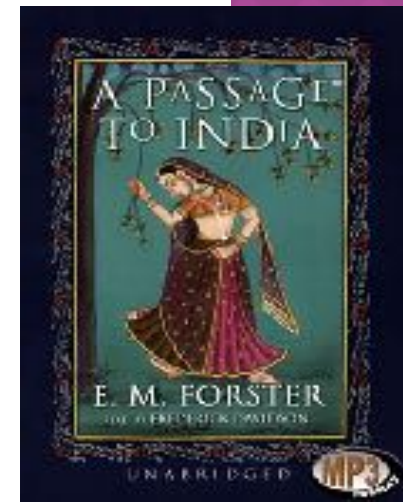
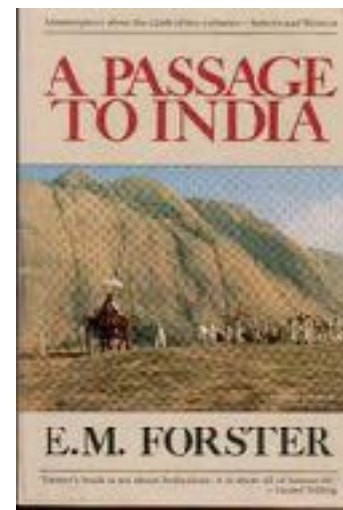
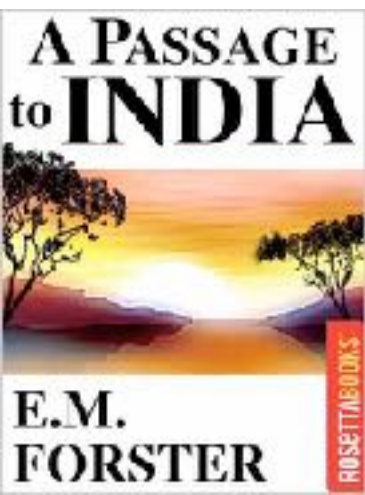
- ◉ After the war tension continued
- ◉ in 1919 ten thousand unarmed Indians were massacred at Amritsar's Jallianwala Bagh during a protest.

BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

- ◉ It is around this time that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became a preeminent force in Indian politics-
- ◉
- ◉ it is also around this time that Forster wrote *A Passage to India*.

BACKGROUND OF THE NOVEL

- ◉ More than twenty years later, after a long struggle, **Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act in 1947**
- ◉ ordering the separation of India and Pakistan and granting both nations their sovereignty.



- ◉ Informed by Forster's own travels to India in 1912-13 and 1921
- ◉ *A Passage to India* has been lauded not only for its critique of the British Empire
- ◉ also for its stylistic innovation and philosophical density.

- In short.... a girl walks into a cave...and an empire trembles

- One of the reasons that Forster's novel -
- Amazing
- it takes an individual case
-

- a rape trial - and shows how it sets off network of social, political, and cultural forces that reverberates across the British Empire

- **Set in India in the early 20th century** when it was still a British colony
- the novel challenges the claim that British had a right to colonize India.

- Britain's "civilizing mission"
- the "white man's burden"

- **British imperialism** was motivated by the idea that -
- the **British were a superior, enlightened, and more advanced race** than non-European peoples
- a duty to "civilize" these people, by force if necessary

- **British imperialism in India** entailed a fundamentally racist set of beliefs about "Orientals,"
- a term which denoted anyone living east of western Europe, from North Africa to China.

- Orientals were considered
passive, weak, illogical, and
morally corrupt with a tendency
toward despotism.

- *A Passage to India* turns this imperial ideology on its head through its scathing depiction of British colonial bureaucrats -



- its detailed portrayal of Indian characters -
- its invocation of India's rich history and culture.

- Despite its critique of the British Empire, Forster's novel continues to draw controversy, particularly in the field of postcolonial studies

- Some critics argue that *A Passage to India* is still bogged down (prevented from making progress) by the Orientalist stereotypes that the novel condemns.
- Others - Forster's **exclusion of women** from the idealized, though fraught, friendships between men in the novel -

- this exclusion of women is seen as revealing how the British Empire was not only a racist system, but a patriarchal one as well.

- As Forster himself said of his novel,
- "When I began the book I thought of it as a little bridge of sympathy between the East and West, but this conception has had to go, my sense of truth forbids anything so comfortable"

□

- In its refusal of "comfortable" solutions to pressing political issues, Forster's novel doesn't give us a blueprint to a better, happier, world.

- Instead, *A Passage to India* offers a way of thinking critically about our relationship to the world, and our relationship to ourselves.

- ◉ **Postcolonial theory** is important in order to discuss and gain an understanding ...

- ◉ The terms like ... imperialism, colonialism, and post colonialism theory sometimes tends to have a tendency to mean different things in different contexts.

- ◉ The Oxford English Dictionary defines
- ◉ imperialism in general terms as
 - “ the principle or spirit of empire; advocacy of what are held to be imperial interests”

- ◉ In British history - the term implies -
- ◉
- ◉ activities aimed at **securing British trade interests and the gradual integration of different parts of the Empire** into a single coherent state (imperialism)

- ◉ Colonialism -
- ◉ “the practice or manner of things colonial” or as a way of describing “an alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak by a large power”

- ◉ Edward Said offers the following definitions in *Culture and Imperialism*:
- ◉ Imperialism means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory;

- ◉ Colonialism which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlers on distant territory

- ◉ Said defines imperialism as an ideology, setting up the foundation for practical colonialism.

- ◉ Bill Asherolt, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin argue in post-colonial studies:
- ◉ The key concepts that colonialism developed alongside capitalism, establishing a hierarchic system of economies exchange with the colonized countries as suppliers of raw materials to the “burgeoning economies of the colonial powers”

- ◉ According to Ania Loomba,
- ◉ “Colonialism is the forcible takeover of land and economy, and, in the case of European colonialism, a restructuring of non-capitalist economies in order to fuel European capitalism.

- ◉ **Post-colonialism**, then could most easily be defined as that which comes after colonialism.
- ◉ That defines the term chronologically as the period after the point in time where a colony gained independence from the colonial power.

- ◉ This term became common when critics started to use it in discussions of the cultural effects of imperialism and colonialism

- ◉ Crucial - when discussing imperialism, colonialism, and postcolonialism is to constantly keep in mind the **importance of location**:

- ◉ Different colonized countries have had **different relations** with their respective colonial powers, and the **reactions to that colonialism** have taken different shapes.

- ◉ Postcolonialism is about language and texts, but it is also about the material conditions of actual persons in actual places.
- ◉ How authors use locations and places to add meaning to the actions and events described in their works

- ◉ Postcolonial theory basically rests upon Marxist perspectives and also indebted to post-structuralism with its focus on discourses and discourse analysis.

- ◉ Edward Said in his Orientalism uses Michel Foucault's notion of discourse to chart the unequal relationship between England and France and their colonies-
- ◉ Or to understand the “West's” relationship with the “East”

- ◉ This use of discourse builds on Foucault's theories on **knowledge and power**
- ◉ Antonio Gramsci's term **“hegemony”** -used by both Foucault and Said
- ◉ According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin -
“domination by consent”

- ◉ Colonialism is the discourse, the system of knowledge established by the colonial power and brought upon the colonies by this colonial power's hegemonic position.

- ◉ Post colonialism assumes the role of a **counter -discourse**, a struggle against the dominant discourse suppressing the native inhabitants of the colonies and maintaining the current system

- ◉ According to Homi Bhabha, one of the main goals of a colonial discourse is to **set up a distinction between “us” and “them”** to justify the unequal hierarchy between the colonial power and the colonized areas, between the colonizers and colonized subjects.

- ◉ In post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin discuss whether the literary period of Modernism, during which Forster's *A Passage to India* is written, partly is a response to the encounter with Africa and other so-called primitive cultures.

- ◉ The “Scramble of Africa” and colonial enterprises in other part of the world were also linked to fear to an **image of these societies as the other side of the cultured European societies-** as exemplified in novels like Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

- ◉ Major Characters in the novel:
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- ◉ 2. Cyril Fielding
- ◉ 3. Adela Quested
- ◉ 4. Mrs. Moore
- ◉ 5. Professor Narayan Godbole
- ◉ 6. Ronny Heaslop

- ◉ The novel is about a young woman
(Adela Quested), going to Chandrapore in India to
meet her fiancé, Ronny Heaslop,
accompanied by her soon to be mother in law
Mrs. Moore

- ◉ They are included in the town's British Club,
they meet an Indian doctor named Aziz and an
English teacher named Cyril Fielding,
and various social events take place.

- ◉ The central incident of the novel is an expedition to the Marabar caves just outside Chandrapore initiated and planned by Aziz.

This is where most things go wrong, and Adela accuses Aziz of rape.

- ◉ The subsequent trial polarizes the Chandrapore society; the English and the Indian milieus stand strongly against each other.

- ◉ Eventually, Adela drops the charges against Aziz, breaks the engagement with Ronny, and leaves town.

- ◉ Relationship between Aziz and Fielding:
- ◉ two men from different cultures meet, become friends, experience various obstacles in their relationship, and are eventually separated by strong politically, culturally and heterosexual forces in the society around them.

- ◉ A passage to India, begins and ends with question-
- ◉ can the English and Indian races be friends and, at the end of the novel, the answer appears to be “No, not yet”.

- ◉ Throughout the novel the barriers to **inter-racial friendship** in a colonial context are explored, and personally experienced by Fielding and Aziz.

- ◉ Forster in common with a number of upper middle class intellectuals was an anti imperialist but his criticism of imperialism is liberal, as opposed to Socialist or Marxist.

- ◉ Forster was a **homosexual** and it was his love affair with an Indian, Syed Ross Massood, a long and turbulent affair, which opened his eyes to India

- ◉ The novel is dedicated to Masood and is partly at least an attempt to come to terms with that relationship of Anglo Indian friendship

- ◉ The novel is, on one level, a **political story**
- ◉ another level a story about **friendship and love**
- ◉ and on a third level, a story **searching for truth and knowledge** in the spheres of religion and spirituality.

Written in the **last phase of decolonization process-**

Forster's last novel **accelerated** the process of decolonization

- Played a **pivotal role**

Elevated India to the status of a worthy literary subject

In *Culture and Imperialism*- Said- Considers - Forster's novel " Immensely Important in the formation of imperial attitudes references and experiences .

- ◉ For Teresa Hubel, A Passage to India is hard on women. (158)
- ◉ It portrays them unfavourably - as shrewish (bad tempered) harpies (cruel women), silly gigglers, confused spinsters, and cranky old ladies” (158)
- ◉ *Harpy- Greek- Roman- Cruel creature with women’s head and body -*
- ◉ *birds wings and feet.*

- ◉ Unlike the men, the women seem to lack the insight that the ‘knowing’ India is an impossible task.
- ◉ Adela is the main victim of this lack of insight, but it also applies to Mrs Moor

- ◉ Feminist readers accuse the text and its author - misogynist

- ◉ Forster's English women according to **Parminder Bakshi's** words
- ◉ They are “the main adversaries in the novel”
- ◉ Elaine Showalter's as

“part of the enemy camp.”

- ◉ Its focal point, namely ‘what happened in the caves’, has inspired a wealth of reading-

from liberal humanist to feminist,

- ◉ psychoanalytical and postcolonial ones.

- ◉ Hubel, argues that the novel *A Passage to India* should be read as a **mediation of male friendship across divide**

- ◉ Third chapter of Hubel's Dissertation interprets Forster's *A passage to India* (1924) a vehicle for the liberal myth of imperialism -

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- ◉ Who owns India
- ◉ “whoever defines India, whoever speaks to and for its people, and whoever imagines its destiny with the hope of determining its future can be said to have a part in it”

- ◉ . Teresa Hubel's argument is premised on the dicta that Nations are imagined communities and examines literary and historical texts by the British and Indian writers who gave meaning to construct "India" during the final decades of the Empire.

- ◉ . Imperialism and nationalism are both discourses which rely on race, gender and class exclusions in order to maintain the internal coherence of their hegemonic claims.

- ◉ . Displacement of these discourses as well as recovery of the voices subsumed in them can be expected to reveal both the nature of the exclusions and the organizing principles of the dominant ideologies.

- ◉ . The history of Indian independence from British colonial rule has been presented largely as an empire- Versus - nation encounter both by British historiographers as well as Indian nationalist writers.

- ◉ . Hubel seeks to re-present this history and its appropriation in British and Indian literary writings by foregrounding the issues of race, gender, class and canonization.

- ◉ . As such her book can be situated within contemporary postcolonial feminist literary/historical writings on India that operate as interpretative interruptions between the centre or Western academy and the peripheral position of Indian texts, as well as critical insertions into the binary discourses of empire and colonial subject.

- ◉ . Writing from the stated perspective of a “white, Canadian woman from Ontario’s Anglo working classes, “Hubel says her aim is to use her whiteness as a site of resistance from which to confront the racism implicit in British imperialism and the imperialist nature of canon of formation.

- ◉ . Teresa Hubel means the appropriation of India as a territory of the imagination disputed by colonial/imperialist writers, reformers and nationalists:

